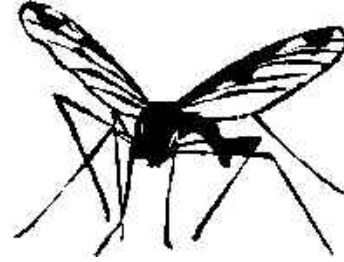


## **BROOKLINE HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

[Alan Balsam](#), Director  
Stephen Glover Train  
Memorial Center  
11 Pierce Street  
Brookline, MA 02445  
617-730-2300



### **Mosquito-Borne Viruses**

## **AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM YOUR HEALTH DEPARTMENT ABOUT MOSQUITO-BORNE VIRUSES**

**Mosquito-borne viruses** are viruses that are carried and spread by mosquitoes. In this part of the country, public health surveillance is done for two mosquito-borne viruses that can cause encephalitis (swelling of the brain) - **West Nile Virus** (WNV) and **Eastern Equine Encephalitis** (EEE). The period of highest risk of getting either disease can be from late July through the fall.

Mosquitoes get WNV and EEE by biting infected birds. People and animals can get these diseases by being bitten by an infected mosquito. There is no evidence that a person can get these viruses from handling live or dead infected birds or animals. However, gloves should be worn when handling any dead animals and double plastic bags used to discard them in the trash.

Most people bitten by mosquitoes carrying WNV will experience no symptoms or very mild symptoms and will recover on their own. Persons over 50 years of age have the highest risk of severe WNV disease. People who are bitten by mosquitoes carrying EEE tend to experience more severe symptoms. Severe symptoms of both diseases include high fever, muscle weakness, headache, disorientation, neck stiffness, paralysis, coma, tremors, convulsions and sometimes death. There is currently no vaccine or medical cure for these illnesses. In severe cases intensive medical therapy such as intravenous (IV) fluids and nutrition, and ventilator support can be administered in hospitals.

## WHAT IS BROOKLINE DOING TO PROTECT ME?

The Brookline Department of Public Health will be involved in active surveillance for mosquito-borne viruses. **It is important that reports of all dead bird sightings be called in to the State Department of Public Health- Dead Bird Hotline at 1-866-MASS-WNV (627-7968).** This information will be recorded and mapped and will aid in directing further bird, mosquito and human surveillance activities. Aside from collecting this information, Brookline will be doing the following to address mosquito-borne viruses this spring and summer:

- Larvicide will be applied to all catch basins and some wetland areas to prevent hatching of new mosquitoes;
- Some crows and blue jays will be collected and sent to the State lab for testing;
- Mosquito traps will be established and mosquito pools will be tested for the virus;
- An information line will be established at (617) 730-2295;
- Mosquito-borne virus information will appear on the Town web site with a link to the State Lab including updated dead bird and mosquito count and test results;
- There will be inspection and enforcement of standing water areas in parks, fields, tires, etc.;
- There will be inspection and enforcement of standing water areas in parks, fields, tires etc.; and

Spraying to kill adult mosquitoes may be done, only if absolutely necessary, and if recommended by the State. Every effort will be made to notify residents of the spraying beforehand.

## WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MYSELF?

### Avoid Bites! Follow these steps:

- Avoid outdoor activity between dusk and dawn. If you must be outdoors when mosquitoes are active, wear a long-sleeved shirt, long pants and socks. Cover baby carriages or playpens that are outdoors with mosquito netting;
- When outside, use a mosquito repellent. Repellents that contain DEET are the most effective, although **DEET should not be used on infants**. This year, the CDC also recommends products which contain either the chemical Picaridin, found in Cutter Advanced; or products containing the oil of lemon eucalyptus. Alternatives to DEET that can also be effective for a limited duration (1hour) on the market are: citronella; Avon Skin-So-Soft Plus IR3535; Buzz Away, neem oil, and soybean oil;
- Avoid areas that tend to have a lot of mosquitoes, such as wetlands or swampy areas;
- Fix holes in all window and door screens;
- Remove standing or stagnant water in your yard where mosquitoes are likely to breed. Check your flower pots, wheelbarrows, garbage cans, birdbaths, swimming pool covers, clogged gutters on your house, old tires, etc.;
- Repair leaking pipes and outdoor faucets;
- Keep your grass cut short and bushes near your house trimmed so mosquitoes can't hide;
- Call the health department if you see standing water problems that are not on your property.

**Whom can I call if I have questions, want to report a dead bird or standing water (water stagnant for more than five days)?**

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|---|--|
| 1. State Department of Public Health-<br>Dead Bird Reporting Hotline<br>(To report dead bird sightings) | 1 (866) Mass WNV/<br>1 (866) 627- 7968 |
| 2. Brookline Department of Public Health<br>(To report stagnant water or complaints)                    | (617) 730-2300                         |
| 3. Information line   | (617) 730-2295                         |

**WNV Web Links-**

[State Health Department](#)

[Centers For Disease Control](#)